

LIFE ON MARS

Is there life on Mars? Possibly – we just haven't found it yet. Those rovers we've dropped on the surface of our nearest celestial neighbour might simply be traversing an unpopulated area of the planet.

It's a different story when it comes to film and television, however. The red planet is crawling with life forms both friendly and fearsome; and some of them covet our own blue world.

The latest inhabitant is Matt Damon, in Ridley Scott's crowd-pleasing blockbuster **THE MARTIAN**. Left behind and presumed dead by his fellow astronauts, he manages to survive using scientific savvy and an optimistic attitude.

But he's human, so let's take a look at some of the more alien inhabitants that have appeared on screens both big and small...



INVADERS FROM MARS

These Martians bury themselves in a sandpit and turn the inhabitants of a small town into obedient zombies. Depending on which version you watch (1953 or 1986), the invaders are either tall green humanoids or big mouths on legs.



GHOSTS OF MARS

John Carpenter conceived a terraformed Mars in the 22nd century, where a mining operation frees the malevolent spirits of the planet's original inhabitants (whose leader resembles Marilyn Manson).



JOHN CARTER

In Disney's disastrous adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *A Princess of Mars*, the eponymous human hero is transported to the planet Barsoom – aka Mars – where he encounters a race of multi-limbed barbarians known as Tharks.



DOCTOR WHO

TV's intrepid Time Lord has encountered all manner of weird and wonderful things from Mars, but none as formidable as the Ice Warriors. These reptilian Martians have attempted to change the Earth's weather and seize the mineral wealth of the planet Peladon, before being foiled by the Doctor.



WAR OF THE WORLDS

H.G. Wells unleashed a Martian invasion of Earth, using tripod-like war machines that destroy cities and harvest humans as fertiliser to grow a red weed. But the common cold ultimately finishes them off.



MARS ATTACKS!

Tim Burton's impish Martian invaders arrive with a wicked sense of humour, declaring they come in peace and then wiping out Congress. Fortunately they prove vulnerable to yodelling – specifically Slim Whitman's 'Indian Love Call'.



MY FAVOURITE MARTIAN

In this sixties' sitcom, a marooned Martian with retractable antennae and a sarcastic wit takes up residence in the garage of an LA journalist, becoming his 'Uncle Martin'. Hilarity and misadventures ensue.



• *The Martian*
is out
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